

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and response is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-9, 12, 14 and 16-21 have been rejected.

Claims 3 and 13 were objected to.

Claims 5, 10, 11 and 15 were previously canceled.

Claims 3 and 13 have been canceled.

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-9, 12, 14 and 16-21 are pending in this application.

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the Examiner's indication that claims 3 and 13 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended to incorporate the recitations of claims 3 and 13, respectively, and are now deemed allowable. Claims 3 and 13 are subsequently canceled. Claims 2, 4, 6-9 are dependent on newly amended claim 1 and applicant's above comments with respect to claim 1 are hereby incorporated by reference. Similarly, claims 14, 16-21 are dependent on newly amended claim 12 and applicant's above comments with respect to claim 12 are hereby incorporated by reference. For the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 2, 4, 6-9, 12, 14 and 16-21 are now deemed allowable.

Therefore, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the above objection.

Claims 1, (2), 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16-19 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Riley et al. (US 7136652) in view of Shafran et al. (US 2003/0186693), and further in view of Morrison (US 5956629). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended into a condition for allowance as detailed above.

Moreover, claims 2, 4, 6 and 9 are dependent on amended claim 1, hereby incorporated by reference, and are now deemed allowable as well for the same reasons. Similarly, claims 14, 16-19 and 21 are dependent on amended claim 12, hereby incorporated by reference, and are now deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been overcome.

Claims 7 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Riley et al. in view of Shafran et al., and further in view of Andersson (US 6173168). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 7 and 20 are dependent on amended claims 1 and 12, respectively, hereby incorporated by reference, and are therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been overcome.

Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Riley et al. in view of Shafran et al., and further in view of Morrison as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Tse (US 6480718). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 is dependent on amended claim 1, hereby incorporated by reference, and is therefore deemed allowable as well for the same reasons.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been overcome.

The other references of record have been reviewed and applicant's invention is deemed patentably distinct and nonobvious over each taken alone or in combination.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully request that the above rejections be withdrawn.

Inasmuch as this amendment distinguishes all of the applicants' claims over the prior art references, for the many reasons indicated above, passing of this case is now believed to be in order. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

Authorization is hereby given to charge any fees necessitated by actions taken herein to Deposit Account 50-2117.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephens et al.

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